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our controversy—the necessity of a living judge to decide our disputes. Will he tell us where this living judge is to be found? and how we are to consult him, and what are his credentials that he is a judge whom we can both trust? We should have supposed that he meant Pope Pius IX., but that, from a subsequent paragraph in the same letter, we collect that he (Dr. Geraghty) is one of the “two hundred millions of Catholics” who, while they hold the supremacy or primacy (some the one, some the other, we suppose, the things being very different) of the present pontiff, do not admit his infallibility. This is just one of the questions on which we have repeatedly attempted before to get Dr. Geraghty’s opinion, but never till now could get him to commit himself about. But if Dr. G.’s living judge be not infallible, we beg to decline submitting ourselves to his jurisdiction. Perhaps, to enable us to understand his views a little more distinctly, Dr. G. will now tell us frankly whether he believes the newly defined dogma of “the Immaculate Conception;” and if so, upon what grounds or authority.

If, however, we are right in supposing that Dr. G. believes the Pope to be the supreme bishop, though not infallible, does he think the Pope, though fallible, to be the “living judge” that we ought to refer our disputes to? and if so, to what living judge does he think we ought to refer the preliminary question, concerning which we are alone disputing at present, viz., whether the Pope has or not any just pretensions to be that living judge? Dr. Geraghty must surely see that this is the real question, and cannot be got rid of by any supposed necessity, in the abstract, for a living tribunal; and if he were not very strongly wedded to his preconceived opinions he might surely easily see that the burthen lies upon him to prove, and not upon us to disprove, such pretensions.

It would be but a sorry thing, we think, to substitute any other fallible tribunal for the reason with which, though fallible, it has pleased God to endow us, guided, as we hope it is, by His living word, and enlightened, we trust, by that Holy Spirit which He has in that word promised to those who ask it in sincerity. If God has established such a living judge, fallible or infallible, it would, of course, be our duty to refer all matters, lawfully within his appointed jurisdiction, to his decision, once we are satisfied that God has so appointed him. Let us, however, be very sure that such judge has been so appointed, or his error may be our ruin.

We confess we scarcely know what Dr. G. means by some of the arguments he uses in his present letter. In the same breath that he insists on the necessity of a living judge, he seems to sneer at the idea that a living evangelist or living Cyprian is necessary to explain what he calls afterwards the evident sense of Matt. xvi. 18. “Do we need,” says Dr. G., “the living evangelist to tell us who is meant here by this rock? or a living Cyprian to tell us if that Church, which in one place, he writes, is built on a rock, is the same with that which, in many other places, he declares, as plain as dumb letters can, to be built on Peter?”

We quite agree with Dr. Geraghty in admitting that we ought to be satisfied with what he is pleased to call the dumb letters of Scripture, without being so unreasonable as to insist upon what God has not been pleased to give, either to us or to St. Cyprian, a living evangelist, or a living judge to interpret the evangelist’s meaning. We have no idea, however, of assuming St. Cyprian, dead or living, as our only guide to the meaning of the passage in dispute, to the exclusion of all others, were it ever so clear, which we think it is not, that he differed from the rest of the Fathers in his interpretation of it. We thought that the doctrine of the Council of Trent was, that we were not to interpret Scripture except in accordance with the unanimous consent of the Fathers; but Dr. G. seems to think that St. Cyprian (supposing him to be on his side) is everything, and the rest nothing. “I confess,” says he, “I was irritated at the bold idea of putting the authority of so ancient and so great a saint into one scale, and that of Launoy all backed as he is by 44 of them, into the other.” Perhaps his irritation might have somewhat subsided if he had taken the trouble to see who the 44 were of whom he speaks thus contemptuously. Will our readers believe that they include the venerable names of St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril, St. Hilary, St. Gregory, St. Thomas Aquinas, and a host of others, including four or five Popes, each of whom, we suppose, was, according to Dr. G.’s belief, Supreme Bishop in his day, and the then only living judge of controversies to whom Dr. G. could have referred if he had lived then, instead of now. And yet he coolly sneers at “the 44 of them,” as if they were of no weight whatever; as all living “a century, at least, too late” to give a verdict. If we insisted on excluding from the jury who was to try the case every Father who lived after the days of St. Cyprian, there is not, we firmly believe, a single dogma, in which the Church of Rome now differs from the Reformed Churches, as to which the unanimous verdict would not be in favour of the latter.

When Dr. G. can find any quotation in favour of his views, he never scruples to rely on it, as being “a century too late,” even though it may be several centuries later than the great Fathers whom he so contemptuously treats as nothing in the scale against Cyprian. But anything amounts to proof with controversialists who argue in support of preconceived opinions, when it serves to make in favour of these opinions; while nothing amounts to proof,

or is of any weight whatever, if it makes against them. We beg to remind Dr. G., however, that in the present case he is neither jury or judge, but a mere advocate; the public is the tribunal to whom we must both apply for the verdict, and, with the decision of impartial minds, we must both rest satisfied, whether we like their decision or not. On this preliminary question, at least, the exercise of private judgment is absolutely indispensable.

Dr. G. cannot, or will not, acknowledge the distinction between the precedency and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. We think we are guilty of no hair-splitting whatever in insisting on it. St. Cyprian’s testimony makes, certainly, in favour of the former, but not at all of the latter. His whole conduct proves that he acknowledged no supremacy. He evidently viewed all Bishops as co-equals in point of power and authority, though widely different in rank. At the period when St. Cyprian lived there was no reason whatever why Rome, as the great capital of the empire, should not be considered the principal see, and the rallying point of that unity which St. Cyprian so eagerly desired to maintain and promote. Rome had not then disclosed her extravagant pretensions to universal empire, and the jealousy and opposition which, at a subsequent period, was roused in the African Church by her attempted encroachments, did not then exist, or was only feebly excited. Yet how vigorously did St. Cyprian oppose the Bishop of Rome the moment they differed in opinion, even upon such a point as the rebaptizing of heretics! This Dr. G. cannot and does not deny. Will he say that if St. Cyprian and his friend Firmilian had looked upon Pope Stephen as they would have looked on St. Peter if still living, that they would have opposed him in the way they did Pope Stephen, or written of him in the same disparaging and contemptuous manner?

Dr. Geraghty asks us how we can account for the Fathers who differed so widely in their interpretation of the passage in St. Matthew all escaping from the condemnation of the Church?

Our answer is very simple—that, in the time of St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and the rest of the Fathers quoted by Launoy, no one had any notion that such a web of sophistry would be woven out of the text in question, and none were so fanciful as to suppose that it could be heretical to treat the faith confessed by Peter as the rock or foundation on which the Church was built. That many of the Fathers who were never accused of heresy did so interpret it, whether they were right or wrong, is, however, not a matter of argument, but a simple matter of fact; and, therefore, it is useless to call for explanations how it could be so, when an appeal to the passages still extant in their writings puts the matter beyond dispute.

We shall have something further to say to St. Cyprian hereafter, but shall close what we have to say for the present by reminding our readers of what we have already said, so far back as December, 1856. (CATHOLIC LAYMAN, vol. v., p. 136). One question alone remains. Is it possible to reconcile all these great authorities together—viz., the four classes of Fathers enumerated by Launoy? On one theory, viz., that of the modern Church of Rome, it is impossible. On the other, that of the Church of England, it is easy. The differences, in fact, as has been well observed by an able modern writer (the Rev. Sanderson Robins), are more apparent than real. “For whether we speak of the act of confession, or the faith confessed, or of Christ, who is the supreme object, or of the principle subjectively considered, either in the body of the Apostles, or in Peter, as representing them; the prevailing idea is one and the same. It makes, however, a very important difference whether Peter is spoken of as the type of a principle common to his colleagues and to all Christians, or whether he is considered as pre-eminent on account of a gift peculiar to himself: the former is what the primitive writers really affirm; the latter is the gloss which Romanists are anxious to put upon their statements.” What we require is, the production of some clear primitive testimony, that by the application of the text in St. Matthew, xvi. 18, whether personally to St. Peter, or to the faith he had just confessed, his supreme power over the whole Church was understood; but for that we have searched in vain, and we think we may confidently assert that nothing of the kind can be found either in St. Cyprian or elsewhere.

COLLIER, THE HIGHWAYMAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

YOUR HONOUR.—It’s a long time since I wrote you a line, and when I stopped at a public house a bit ago, I come on a book with a history of a man I knew well, as who didn’t in Meath and Dublin counties, ten years ago—it’s Collier, the highwayman, I’m talking of.

Many’s the time I heard them stories talked over in his own public-house on the Ashbourne-road, after he come back from sojering in the West India, where he was sent at last; and all them stories is in the book; how he robbed the rich and give to the poor, and how, many a time, he run with the dragoons and hunting horsemen after him, and still got clear, where not another fox in Meath would; and all the mail coaches he robbed—six, no less; and one time, by himself alone, with no body to help him, only sticks set up at the back of the

ditch, with hats a top of them, and he firing for them all, and had the mail bags and the purses to his pleasure. For fear the old hats beyond the ditch would fire again! Well, it beats all, them stories; sure it beats “Freney the Robber,” the book I got my schooling in.^b And then to think of all that happened to poor Mick Collier’s men; out of four and twenty men, fourteen was hanged, six was shot, two transported (them was in luck), one got away to America, and only one living in Ireland when Collier died in 1849.

Well, there was wild times in Ireland not long ago, when all that could be done. But what wonder, your honour, when most of the boys got their schooling in Freney the Robber, and no other book. Sure, wasn’t it myself was in luck not to take after the schooling I got? Well, that’s a good bit mended now anyway. Isn’t it queer it wasn’t mended till a while ago? and isn’t there a great deal to mend yet? Now, isn’t it a wonder our clergy, that makes such brags of their power on the people, didn’t mend it before? Sure I mind the schools that come in next after the old schools that taught Freney the Robber; them was called the Kildare-place schools, and Freney was put out, and the Bible put in: wasn’t there the hunting and the larrying then? Wasn’t the priest ever more hanting the children out, and the children stealing back again when all was quiet? Many the time my own children was hunted because the Bible was read. But sure when I was at school it was all quiet; never a priest hunted me for reading Freney the Robber. Most like, Collier and his men got their schooling in that book, and wouldn’t it put them on thinking what they could do? ‘Deed I believe the children liked school better then than they do now. Never a child of mine ever loved a school book the way I did Freney the Robber.

Now, I wouldn’t say anything against my clergy, or their power with the people. There’s a deal of good and quiet men among them. But, in my notion, their power is great one way, and is little another way. A priest is mighty strong to get the people rize, when he pleases it; but, them, if he was to go for to stop the people at anything, he would find he couldn’t stand in their way; and the priests doesn’t like to try that, for fear of letting down their power with the people. Sure enough, a priest can give a deal of good advice, if he doesn’t do any harm, or try to go too strong. Isn’t there the story in the book how Collier had a hard run for 12 miles to Stamullen, in Meath, with horsemen after him, across the country, and sat down upon St. Sheelah’s day to have a glass of whiskey to set him up, and in comes the girl crying out, “He is coming;” and the house had no other door, and down pops Collier on his knee forement the door, with his big pistol, full of slugs, rested on his left arm; and who comes in only Rev. Mr. Ennis, the priest, to see what the boys was doing in the public-house St. Sheelah’s day. And, sure enough, Collier drops his pistol, and—“Oh, you unfortunate man,” says the priest, “is it you that is here?” “Yes, your reverence,” replied Collier. “I have only just come through a hard chase.” On which he was exhorted to a change of life; that he should leave the confines of the parish, and not continue with the flock, to all of which he promised a ready obedience.^c For it’s himself that wanted that time to be elsewhere. But sure the priests couldn’t handle the boys that followed Collier’s example as easy when they were at business. Doesn’t the book tell us of a party which “robbed the house of Rev. Mr. Sheridan, at Ballinlough, P.P. of Painstown, consisting of thirteen men, who expected to find the sum of £500, which he had collected to build a chapel, but fortunately he placed it in Dublin. He was shot at while expostulating with the robbers from an upper window, and he only saved his life by stooping his head to let the contents of a blunderbuss pass over it.”^d There is nothing in Ireland like ducking your head in time; and indeed Mr. Sheridan was a kind man, and although they eat his supper and drank his wine, and he looking on and not getting his share, when nine of them was sentenced to be hanged at Trim, he begged them off and got them only transported; and I wouldn’t wonder if he gave them absolution too, only the book doesn’t say it. But I wonder did Father Sheridan think that night of the schooling the boys got in Freney the Robber, and whether the Bible would be as bad.

Sure that’s the way it is now with the Ribbon Society, that’s the worst of the old things that’s now standing. Sure the priests would all stop that if they could, for it takes the boys from under them. Wasn’t I in the chapel of the Rev. Mr. M’Kenna, in Meath, 10 years ago, when he preached again the Ribbonmen, and didn’t the whole congregation walk out sooner nor hear themselves abused.

So, your honour, Freney is gone by, and Collier too. I’m only sorry it wasn’t the clergy put them down, but only the polis. But the Ribbonmen is getting up mighty strong in these parts since the Sepoys rize, looking for their own turn next. Sure it isn’t the fault of the clergy, for they would put them down, only they couldn’t; and they couldn’t if they would. For sure them that lives by the people has to follow the people; and that’s as true as that I’m

PAT MURRAY, of Westmeath.

^a We would beg of our readers to refer back to the extracts from St. Cyprian’s works, given in our last January number, p. 2; we feel no doubt as to their verdict on the matter.

^b We suppose the book which Pat Murray got was the “Life and Adventures of Michael Collier, the celebrated Leinster Highwayman, compiled with care by John Apperott. Drogheda, 1844.”

^c It is stated in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Schools in Ireland, A.D. 1825, that the “History of Freney the Robber” and “Moll Flanigan” were the reading books then commonly in use in the “hedge schools” in Ireland.

^d Life of Collier, p. 37. We have looked, and find the statement correctly given.

^e Life of Collier, p. 61.